

April 2008

Facets

for women



Caring for **paradise**

**Sisters
“go to church”
in the woods**

**Asparagus
lovers
rejoice**

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RANDY DID...

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Gosh, lets talk about smiling! Before you performed the excellent work on my teeth, I was always covering my mouth with my hand when talking because I was so self-conscious about my appearance. I did not smile much, so people thought I was just a grouch! Now I smile all the time, and I find that people are much more receptive to me! I recently had an opportunity to promote a favorite singer in a public sector, and with my new appearance, I felt very confident with my presentations. Turns out that the promotions I did for that singer were a huge success!

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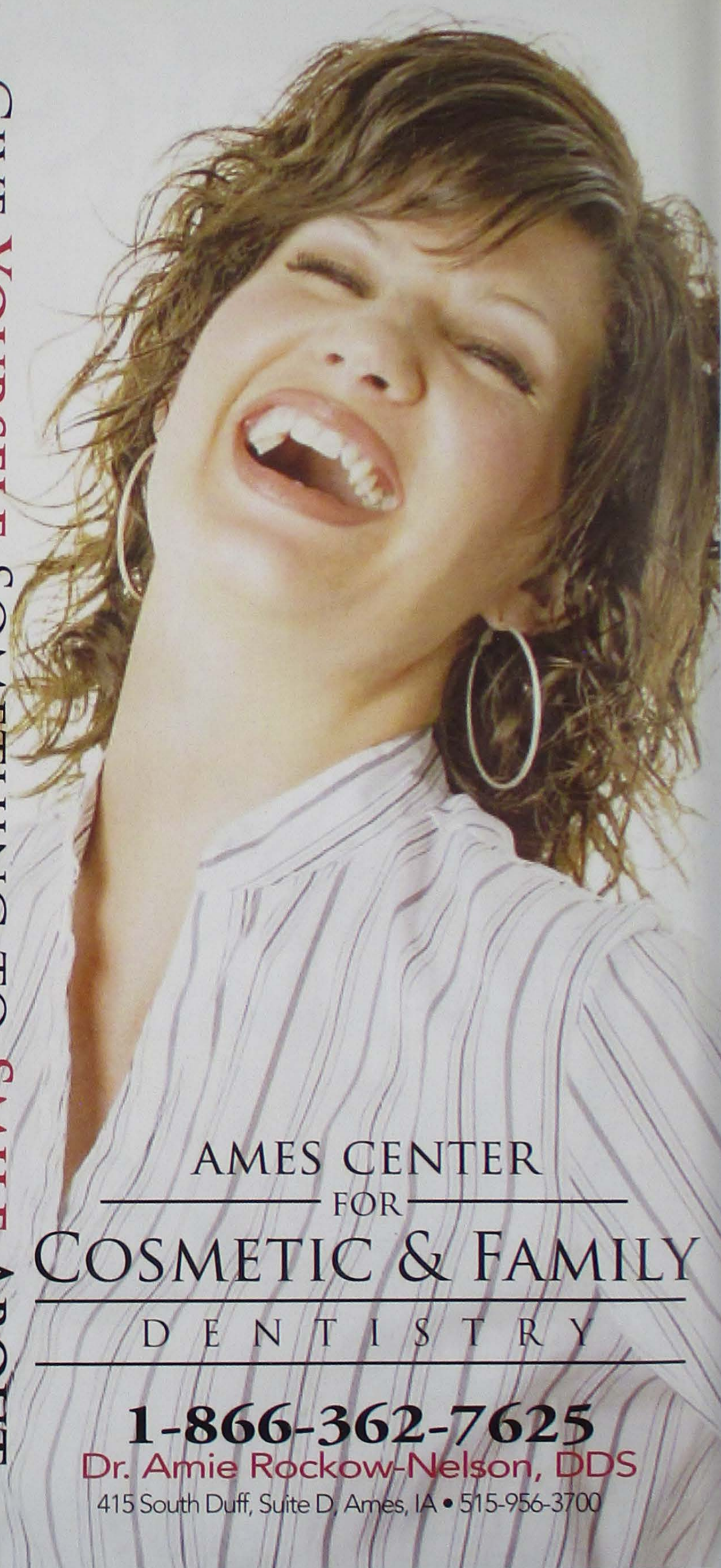
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hue & cry

Definition: Any loud clamor or protest intended to incite others to action.



By JOLENE PHILO

Warm weather has been slow in coming to Iowa this year. But after months of ice and snow and cold, signs of spring are sprouting. The snow piles in our yard are shrinking and the grass peeking through is a vibrant green. The layer of ice that turned our long, gravel driveway into a treacherous skating rink in November has finally melted. Our gravel road is a muddy mess and the robins are back.

During shopping trips I see signs of warm weather's inevitable arrival, temporary greenhouses and garden centers, springing up in store parking lots all over town. Soon lazy, new millennial gardeners like me will swarm the greenhouses, purchasing flats of annuals to fill in those pesky bare spots in gardens and pots of perennials to replace what the harsh winter killed.

As I take my purchases to the cash register, I'll think of my grandmother who was a devoted gardener and flower lover. She died in 1998, and, though I miss her, each spring I'm a bit relieved that she's not here to see what a spend-thrift I've become. She raised her family of eight during the Great Depression and would be appalled by what I spend on ready-made plants. I can almost hear her scolding me. "Don't waste your money, girl. Grow them yourself. All you need is a 10-cent package of seed."

Grandma Josie grew her bedding plants every spring. In fact, buying seed packets instead of saving her own seed over the winter was her only concession to horticultural progress.

"Seeds cost a little more," she would

say, "but some of the new hybrids are hardier and better producers."

Starting in January, she saved half-gallon cardboard milk cartons. In April, she cut them in half lengthwise and filled the makeshift shallow trays with dirt Grandpa dug from the yard. Together they seeded trays of tomatoes, green peppers, cabbage, kohlrabi, snapdragons, marigolds and much more. They carried the trays into their living room, arranged them on the radiators below the picture windows and watered them faithfully. A few weeks later, they had all the bedding plants they needed.

Grandma also raised African violets. Her pots were housed in four multi-armed plant holders beneath the windows in the den. Whenever I dried dishes for Grandma, she inspected the African violet leaves, picked off the plants in the den, floating in bowls of water beside the sink. "Look there," she would tell me, pointing at a scraggly leaf. "It's got roots." The pleasure she found, coaxing life from what could easily have been thrown away, was evident.

Grandma didn't buy geraniums either. All summer long, she saved tin cans, bending each can's lid into a tent shape. The lid was placed, peak side up, in the bottom of the can. As fall approached, she and Grandpa took cuttings off the geraniums that flourished in her flowerbeds and set them in water. Once the cuttings rooted, she planted them in the tin cans filled with more dirt dug from the yard. Each spring, she and grandpa planted them outside again, next to the house and along their picket fence. One winter, I tried to count the geraniums sitting on all the windowsills. I gave up at 98.

One of the geraniums came from a cutting passed on to Grandma from her

mother. Grandma gave my mother a cutting, and for the past few years, Mom has rooted some for me. I put them in pots on my patio, and by mid-summer the leaves are deep green. The small, tight blossoms are rich red threads that bind me to a great-grandmother I never knew.

Last fall I realized I wanted to pass the thread on to my daughter. But instead of taking a cutting, I wintered my plants over, following instructions from a gardening magazine. I dug and trimmed the geraniums, shook the dirt off their roots and stored the plants, upside down in a large box, in a basement closet. Later this month, I'll pot them and wait to see if the experiment worked. If it does, I'll give my daughter a bit of family history for her birthday in July.

In the meantime, I'm taking a page out of Grandma Josie's book. I saved my milk jugs and cut them down into shallow trays. I plan to pick up a few seed packets – snapdragons and cosmos and sunflowers – from the grocery store display next week. But I may not buy potting soil. Instead my husband and I will fill the makeshift trays with dirt from our flowerbeds. Once the seeds are sown, I'll set shallow trays heaped with springtime on a plant stand beneath the living room window.

The pleasure of coaxing life from what could easily be thrown away is something Iowans need after the long, cold winter of 2008. So go for broke this April. Spend an extra dollar at the store and buy some seeds. Grab a shovel, some old tin cans and your watering jug. Start spring early in a sunny window in your home.

It'll do you good. It'll give you hope. And it's almost free.

If Grandma Josie were here, she'd be smiling.

Green/gardening
issue

Next month:
Motherhood

WELCOME TO

Facets

Facet - 1. One of the flat surfaces cut on a gemstone.

2. The particular angle from which something is considered.

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Cover photo:

Horticulturalist Betsy Eness tends to her charges at Reiman Gardens

By Ronnie Miller



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GREEN on the GO

By DEBRA ATKINSON

Women today spend a significant amount of time, energy and creativity determining how to make a bigger impact on the world. On the environmental front, the reverse is true. How can you minimize your carbon footprint and therefore reduce damage to the world you leave behind? If your thoughts land in this area more and more, you aren't alone.

Buzz words of *eco-impact*, *natural*, *organic* and *biodegradable* are abundant. In fact, they are quickly becoming the "trans-fat free" food marketing equivalent in the environmentally conscious community. If it has "zero impact" a product gets more attention. Whether vogue, hip or simply the right and conscientious thing to do, finding ways to take part in the movement may positively impact your own health.

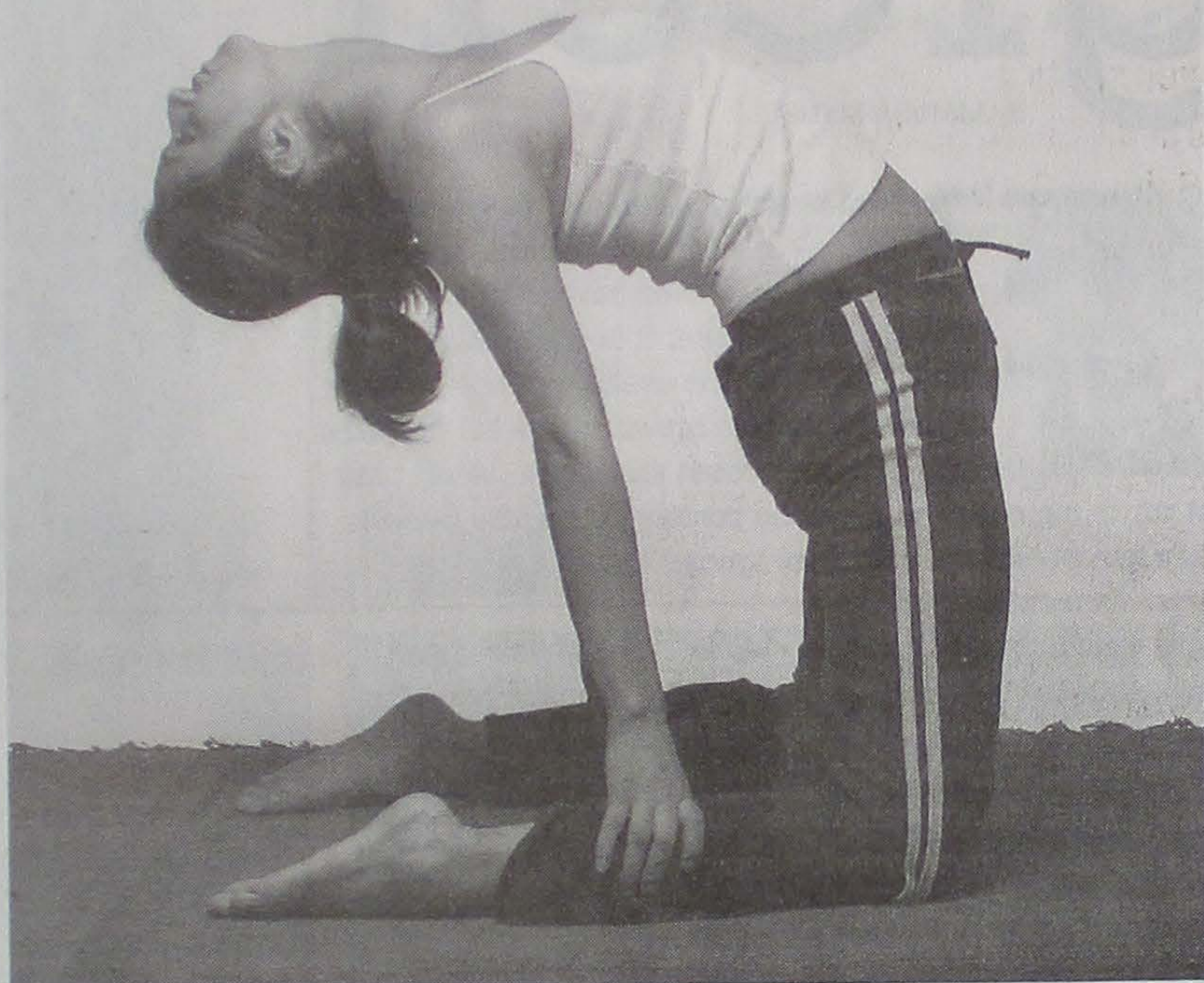
How can you make a difference? Remember that your dollar is your voice. If you are purchasing new products to replace old worn ones, you can make conscious decisions both about the purchase and about the disposal of the old products. You can downsize, giving away or donating your excesses instead of using more than you truly need. You can choose materials that have the smallest impact on the environment.

Yogis seek some meditative state of relaxation to enhance their flexibility both of mind and body. Carrying that from the mat into the world implies a greater consciousness of each individual's role in caring for the world around them. Choices are available in the tools and props of the trade:

A natural rubber yoga mat that can be composted and is 100 percent eco-friendly is available from Natural Fitness at www.naturalfitness.com. The company also produces Hemp Yoga Bags, Hemp Yoga Bolsters, Yoga Straps and Blocks.

Outfitting yourself to inspire your workouts or yoga practice, you can choose from natural soy, organic cotton, silk or bamboo materials that are made from harvest grown without the use of pesticides. Visit www.GAIAM.com for a selection of natural and minimum footprint products that includes clothing and products similar to those of Natural Fitness.

Cleaning up after a good workout is a



concern. According to author Valerie Woorwood, most essential oils are antiseptics and inhibit bacteria growth – some are antifungal and antiviral as well. Her book "The Complete Book of Essential Oils & Aromatherapy" describes several ways to use non-toxic essential oils in and around your home, gym bag or on your yoga mat. Just a few drops of tea tree oil, lemon or eucalyptus oil in two cups of water make a simple and harmless spray bottle's worth blend for disinfecting yoga mats after practice. If it's to be kept for a time and not used all at once, the blend should be in a clean, dark glass bottle stored away from light and heat.

Fragrance-free cleaners are available from www.greenfibers.com. Your local HyVee and Wheatsfield grocers are also sources of a growing pool of natural

cleaning and food products to sustain both you and the environment. Seventh Generation is one company that provides non-toxic cleaners for those who prefer the ready-made version to making up their own.

Buying locally made products when possible makes sense for the environment. For more information on locally made natural products contact Angela Clark at www.enrgPATH.com. Clark was instrumental in organizing an exposition to increase awareness of the resources available locally. The Natural Living Expo held just last month in Ames is evidence that a growing number of people are becoming interested in living well and being a part of extending the health and longevity not only of themselves but of the world around them.

[BOOK NOTES]

Turn your black thumb green

By MARISA MYHRE



I have been accused over the years of having a black thumb when it comes to plants. I don't even have to be put in charge of it, or water it or even touch it. Just looking at a plant is usually enough to make it wither and turn brown. I have killed spider plants, violets, roses and a rare desert plant

that you're supposed to set in the corner, give a little water to every few weeks and otherwise ignore (that one took me almost six months to do in).

That said, there is a part of me that has always enjoyed gardening, and the book this month gave even me hope that I could get something to grow out of any piece of ground.

"Lasagna Gardening" by Patricia Lanza was first published in 1998 and has enjoyed great success over the years. I've seen it sell very well every spring and felt it was the obvious choice for this month.

The book offers a new way of gardening that allows the planter to harvest from even the most rocky and uncooperative soil. It is completely chemical free, in fact using garbage from the kitchen as a form of recycling that has a green and healthy feel to it. It offers a garden that doesn't need to be watered and needs very little weeding. The author promotes it as the owner of a hotel, a cook, and a mother who wanted to garden but didn't have enough time to spend by doing it the way she saw her grandmother manage. She offers a modern, time-saving but still healthy option.

What it calls for is a layering of compost, peat moss and nearly any other sort of biodegradable material that could be rounded up. The "lasagna" refers to the layers of compost put in place. Nearly all that is needed is a layer of newspaper on the bottom and several layers of compost with peat moss between. Anything from leaves to kitchen scraps to grass clippings are suggested, while certain materials are recommended depending on the crops.

Because the plants grow in the compost, a lasagna garden can be started in any soil no matter how rocky or infertile it is.

The book provides ideas of how to start the compost for

the garden nearly any time of year, from preparations set down the fall before planting to the early spring to even a summer construction designed for fall crops. She tells how to design, set up and plant a garden in a single day or even move an older garden.

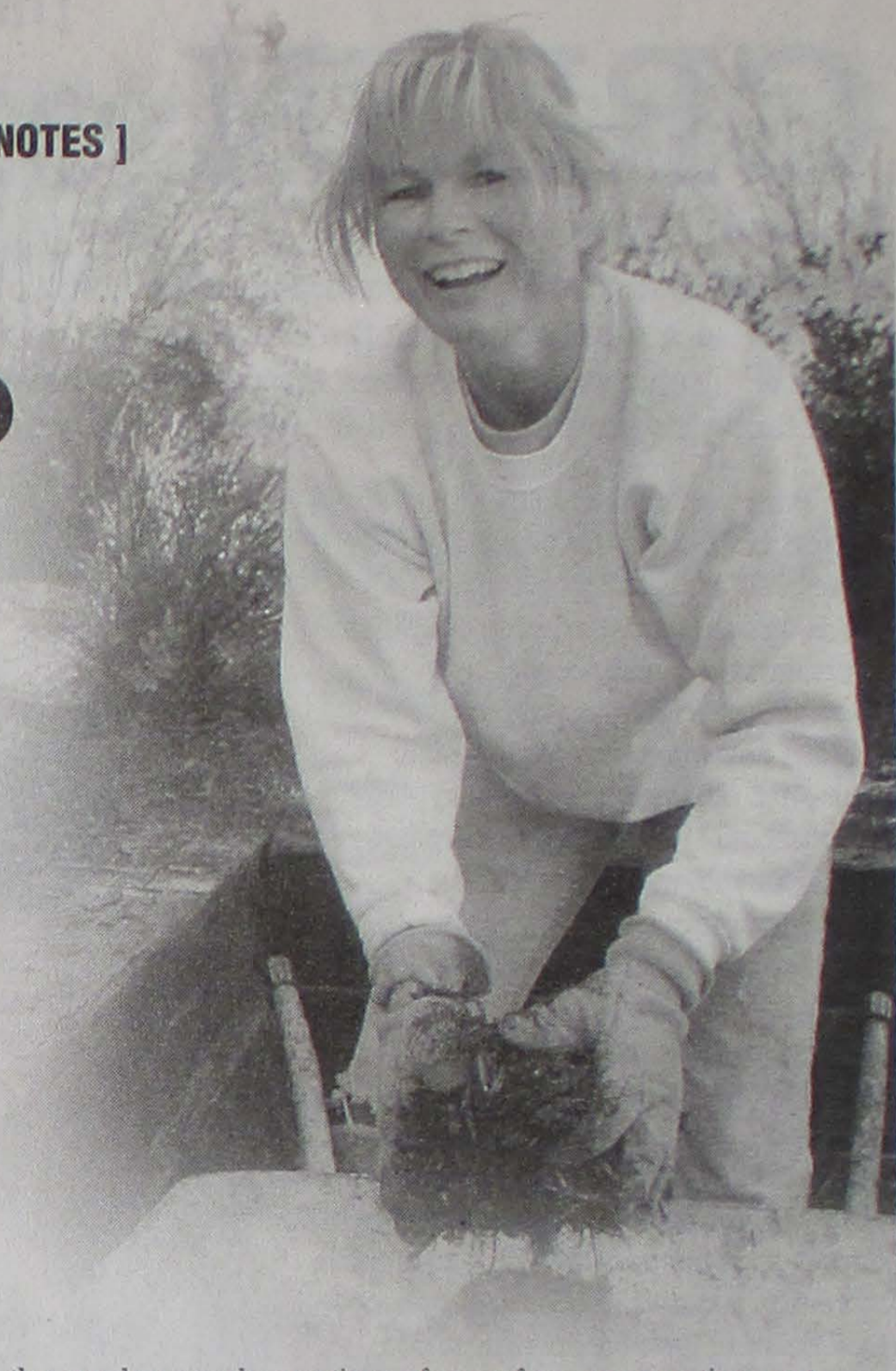
The book is also overflowing with tips that could help any gardener. The author provides tips on how to naturally keep pests from invading the garden using a fence covered with tasty plants they might prefer.

Lanza offers suggestions for setups of different gardens, including berry bushes and flowers as well as herbs and vegetable gardens, including information on flower arranging.

She spends a great deal of time discussing the different crops and offering tips. She tells when to cut crops to get a second harvest. She talks about putting baskets over plants to blanch them. She even gives tips on how to cook nearly all of the vegetables mentioned and an old recipe for sun vinegar.

Overall I found this book fun and chatty as well as informative. It was a pleasure to read even for someone who isn't an avid gardener.

So if you're looking for suggestions for a new way to garden or some old tried and true lessons, this is a book that has withstood the test of time and earned an official recommendation from a certified black thumb.





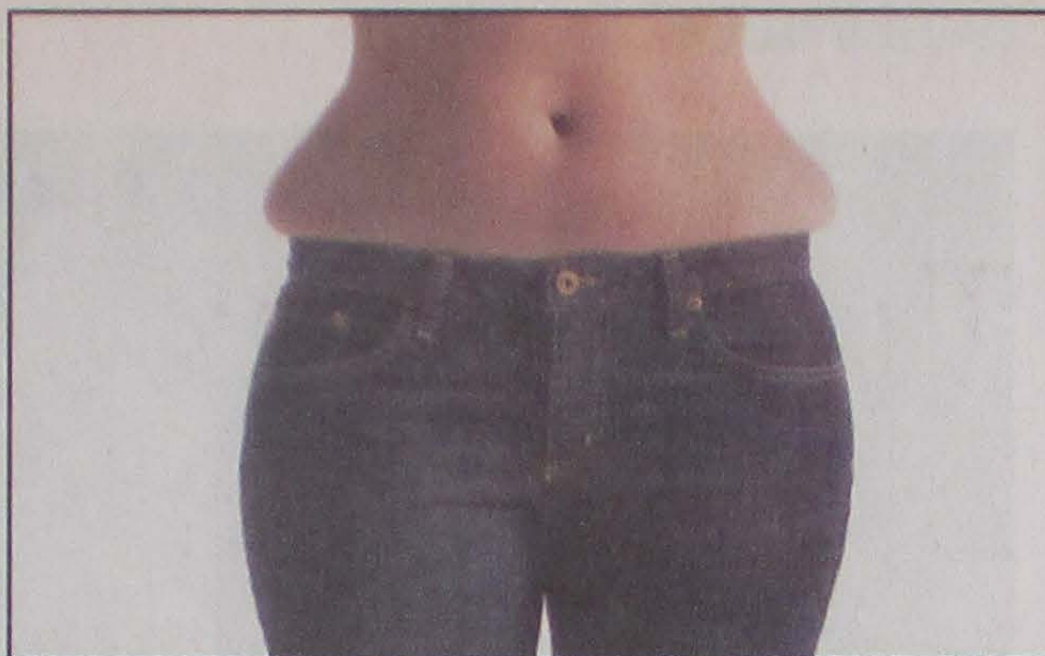
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EVERYTHING under glass

*Betsy Eness fills Reiman's
indoor gardens with green*

By LAURA MILLSAPS
Staff Writer

When horticulturalist Betsy Eness pushes open the doors of the Reiman Gardens Conservatory, it's easy to see why she loves her job.

"I get to work in paradise every day," she said.

It doesn't seem that much of an

exaggeration given the ferocity of this winter, contrasting with the warm summery sound of trickling water and the tropical greens all around.

Eness is the indoor horticulturalist for Reiman Gardens. The conservatory, the Butterfly Wing gardens, and the greenhouses are her professional

garden space. "I take care of everything under glass," she said. On this windy, snowy March morning, under glass is a great green relief of a place to be.

Any gardener worth her potting soil knows this isn't the time of year for Eness to be standing around wish-

ing idly for spring. March is the time for planning, and seed starting, and she's got plenty of both going on.

Paradise is a little in disarray right now, with major renovations to the interior going on, right along with preparations for the coming season. This year's theme for Reiman is "novel gardens" based on favorite books in literature. The theme for the conservatory is Peter Pan, and it was Eness' own idea.

"I used to work hourly here, and it was an idea that grew out of that time I spent, watering, thinking about things while I was bored," she said.

While the staff gets together with Lisa Orgler, the assistant director for planning and programs, to put together the themes, Eness is excited to see her own idea come to life in the conservatory.

It sounds as much like stage set design as gardening. Waving her hands over the conservatory beds, she describes a London skyline, a three-dimensional Big Ben and three stumps to house the Lost Boys, all being constructed in the Reiman workshop. There will be a topiary alligator, and a mister to complete the setting.

The choice of plants will be story book-bright, with red cyclamens, orange osteospermums and blue primulas.

The comparison to an artist's paint box isn't missed by Eness.

"I spent my first year of school in art education, and my second year in flower arrangement, so yes, this is my palette. But it's not just the colors with plants, it's the textures, the different types of leaves. Some are ferny, others grassy."

She leads the way into the "head house" where they fill seed trays and pots, and prepare container displays.

It's also become her office in the midst of renovation. It smells like potting soil. One of the outdoor garden themes is the Mad Hatter's tea party from Alice in Wonderland, and topiary forms of teapots and cups and saucers await attention, along with the alligator for the Peter Pan display.

In the greenhouses, trays of plants are in various stages of growth, from tiny little sprouts of hibiscus to cyclamen plants robustly filling 4-inch pots. The problem this year, said Eness, is the greenhouse plants seem as eager for spring as any winter weary Iowan. Some are already "blooming their little heads off," when ideally the horti-

prevent exotic species of insects from escaping the dome.

There is also the upkeep in a heavily used small area.

"It's a constant maintenance issue. Children run the race-track around the path in here, and sometimes you'll come in and find a body-shaped impression in the annual beds, where someone fell," Eness said.

With her professional knowledge and a huge array of plant material to choose from, one wonders what Eness' personal preferences are.

At the gardens, there is a drive to choose plants that are unique and use them in new and creative ways.

"I get to work in paradise every day."

culturalists try to time peak blooms for the opening of their displays.

Still, Eness loves the payoff for this intense period of work and preparation.

"It's my favorite time, when things start blooming. When I send them out of the greenhouses into the outdoor displays, it's like sending my babies off to kindergarten."

The gardens in the Butterfly Wing also pose unique horticultural challenges. Plants for the wing have to be chosen carefully to provide nectar for the butterflies, and they must be grown in a special "entomology zone" in the greenhouse, so that no harmful chemicals are used. No host plants that would encourage breeding can be used, according to restrictions set by the USDA. Anything that they discard must be incinerated or frozen, to

"Around here we always joke about those airplane plants that grew in the macramé hangers. Here we try to get away from the expected varieties."

Personally, though, Eness prefers the tried and true.

"I like to rely more on plants that are fabulous without a lot of maintenance, old fashioned plants like iris and daylilies."

So does her personal garden look fabulous without a lot of maintenance?

Eness smiles.

"It's not Reiman Gardens. I guess that's always the hazard of having your hobby and passion become your job. Weeding's not the first thing you want to do, after work, coming home from this job. But I feel lucky to have a job I love so much."

Who could have imagined that a childhood filled with large Sunday family picnics in an unforgettable wooded river valley would lead to one of the largest private land donations ever made in Iowa? Or that the gift would come from women: a rural feminist and her five daughters? Or that through a variety of applications, the resulting conservancy works to protect, sustain and use the land?

Letting it be:

The practical partnering of responsibility, sustainability and utility, and why women in Iowa should pay attention.



Photo by Sue Ellen Tuttle

Eight miles of the Middle Raccoon River flow through the Whiterock Conservancy, a diverse landscape containing oak forest, oak savanna, wetlands, river bottoms and prairie. Whiterock draws its name from unique sandstone outcroppings found along the river.

By SUE ELLEN TUTTLE

"Spectacular!" she said, a bit breathless. She had just come from the river on this wintry Sunday afternoon. "Huge icebergs are coming down the river, along with trees and other garbage. It's spectacular!!"

"Spectacular..." I repeated, confused. "Is that good or bad?"

"Overall, it's bad. Water moves so fast through our environment because of the drainage tiles under Iowa farmland; the huge amounts of water dumped into the river will quickly cut banks and erode soil," the eldest Garst sister explained. "If we could figure out how to slow up water coming through our land, we would have better water quality in Iowa," she added.

Named for a grandmother who continually ordered her farmer husband to move the fences back to make room for enough garden plots for all of her grandchildren, Liz Garst — and her sis-

ters Sarah, Rachel, Kate and Jennifer — have been immersed in environmental awareness from an early age. Their mother, Mary Garst, put them to work on the farm when they turned 4 years of age. "I paid them 5 cents an hour," she recalled.

And there was no escaping their father's conservation-minded farming practices. "Early on he developed no-till, installed waterways (strips of grass in low areas) and used terraces to reduce soil erosion," Liz recalls with pride. In fact, her parents' love of the land permeated all aspects of family life.

"We grew up in those woods with a very strong appreciation for Iowa in general and a strong emotional connection to the river valley land in particular," Kate observed.

"And the river valley," Sarah revealed, "is where our family went to 'church' every Sunday; we went to the woods, and we went on picnics. We would fish from one of the 26 ponds

stocked with catfish and northern pike," she reminisces. Sundays were sacred as the siblings went mushrooming or hunted deer, hiked, went horseback riding or looked for clay veins in the stream, built forts with branches or tried to catch fish with bare hands in the river of their outdoor sanctuary. Rachel remembers rehabilitating and releasing all kinds of wildlife living on the land: a red tailed hawk, a great horned owl, coyote, song birds.

"And I remember I followed my grandmother around the woods and watched her dig up wildflowers to take back to her garden," said Kate. "Picking plums for canning, gathering bitter-sweet, trying to make nettle soup."

While the Garst farm near Coon Rapids represented a landscape that nurtured a sense of place, it was also a place that cultivated exploration and growth, and one by one, the sisters ventured forth. Personal journeys took them to study at Stanford, Michigan State,

Harvard, Swarthmore, Friends World College, University of California San Francisco, Brown and Iowa State University

Collectively they studied English and economics, agribusiness and veterinary medicine, American civilization and medicine and social psychology. They spent time studying and working and touring in California, Ohio, New Mexico, Seattle, Vermont, Michigan, Washington state and Washington, D.C. as well as Italy, Columbia and Guatemala. There were stints in the Peace Corps, work with the World Bank, the year at a ski resort. Between them, the sisters practiced medicine, taught at universities, wrote books and toured the country for 18 months on a bicycle.

Liz was the first to return to Iowa in the early '80s; Kate's return a couple of years ago "completed the set." Iowa drew each sister back for different reasons, but the singular common element was their love of the rural environment. "I wanted to raise my children on the Iowa landscape," explained Rachel. "I gave up my place in Berkeley/Oakland as an expert in security reform and policy

advocacy to live seven miles out of town in the woods with chickens, dogs and horses, where I can spend a lot of time out of doors."

Kate concurs. "Living in the city is sexy, but there is no replacing family and sense of place." She and her family now live in Des Moines "on the same river I grew up on."

* * *

In addition to her efforts to restore some of the valley's native prairies and wetlands, Liz had been running an ecotourism business — Garst Farm Resort — based on the family farm for about seven years when her father died in 2004.

Stephen Garst's death caused some reshuffling of ownership and it became clear, Kate recalled, that when the next person died, the land holdings would splinter. Sitting together in a room, the Garst women pondered the future. "Since the late '80s, non-tillable land has had little economic value," Sarah explained. "It's lovely to have and to own and enjoy, but you look at the future and think what's going to happen to the diverse wooded river valley."



Because they believe that healthy human and natural environments rely on the presence of strong connections between people and the land, the Garst women established Whiterock Conservancy to "provide a place where people can interact with the environment through outdoor recreation and environmental education at their own pace." From left: Rachel (Coon Rapids), Sarah (West Des Moines), Mary (Coon Rapids), Liz (Coon Rapids), Jennifer (Ames) and Kate (Des Moines).

Contributed photo

Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation

www.inhf.org

The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, a member-supported, nonprofit group, works to protect Iowa's land, water and wildlife for current and future generations. With its focus on Iowa, the foundation provides private action and leadership to save our natural resources. Activities include wetland restoration, woodland conservation, trail development, prairie restoration, river and stream enhancement, sustainable agriculture, soil and water quality protection, regional resource planning, environmental education and permanent protection of Iowa land. INHF has protected or restored nearly 100,000 acres of Iowa's wild places. INHF provides non-partisan leadership on policy issues regarding its work.

Check the Web site to view current projects and find out how to help.

BioBlitz

Volunteers are extremely important to the Whiterock Conservancy mission. Opportunities for those who enjoy recreation-based volunteerism abound. Help with a prescribed prairie burn, or plant native seeds. Participate in a Whiterock Conservancy bird count, or add to our knowledge of the preserve in your own area of expertise. Help clean up the Middle Raccoon River as you paddle down it in a canoe.

In May, the conservancy is hosting BioBlitz, where experts will come in during one 24-hour period and conduct huge inventory work on all sorts of plants and animals. The public will be invited to accompany and assist. Think owls, night insects, bats...

"For me," Jennifer noted, "the land was a legacy that was left to me; I really value the land itself. I could not imagine selling it or having it sold. But the estate taxes were going to get us."

Somewhere in the dialogue, Liz spoke. "What are you going to do with it?" she asked. "We can only protect it as long as we are living." As she verbalized the family's shared value for the land, heads began to nod. Mary Garst remembers that after her daughter proposed they find a way to hold the block of land together, the group talked for hours. A consensus emerged to ensure the land be used and protected at the same time, in sustainable ways that could begin to balance economics and natural environments.

Common values united in this vision. "We were all 'Yes, yes!!'" Kate said. Many supporters...people who owned other fragments...cousins, family friends...contributed to the concept. "There is a lot of love for this land going back generations," she noted.

In these moments, seeds that had been planted in childhood bloomed new life as Mary Garst and her daughters began to explore how to best protect and preserve their beloved landscape.

With guidance from the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, the Garst women worked to formulate what is today the Whiterock Conservancy.



Photo by Sue Ellen Tuttle

The River House and nearby dance barn offer naturally beautiful settings for group events such as weddings or board meetings. During warm weather the River House can accommodate up to 800 guests, and up to 25 over winter months.



Photo by Sue Ellen Tuttle

The historical Hollyhock Cottage sleeps six and features an equipped kitchen and bath. Located on the main Garst home farm, the structure that began as a chicken coop was recycled into a garden shed and handyman space before becoming a cozy garden cottage. A massive, ancient cottonwood tree just beyond the walk provides morning shade in summer.

The ambitious goal that Liz articulated that afternoon, to engage people and economics and natural resources in a single, collaborative endeavor, has paid off. Today the Whiterock Conservancy is attempting to provide — on every acre — sustainability, economic potential and environmental/natural resource protection with public access and education. An example Liz cites is the previous brome grass monoculture in the valley. "We are trying to diversify, by integrating multi-species, environmentally healthy plants that use less nitrogen to sustain cattle as well as land," she explains. "We aspire to creating a

place where people can look at cows and birds."

"It wasn't painful to think about giving it away," Jennifer said, "because I knew it was going to be protected. From her professional experience in gift planning, Jennifer understands this is a critical issue for Iowa women. Because women often live longer, they often end up as owners of land. She talks to many women who find the transfer of land to be a big deal."

One of the things Jennifer finds interesting, in terms of women and the transfer of wealth, is how they are going to manage the land. "Are they going to approach it in a more nurturing fashion? Will women take any different approach? I am curious to see..." she noted.

"A lot of land in Iowa is managed based on productivity or profit," Rachel observed. "But it is important to think

about other goals one might have for their land. There are a lot of female land owners in Iowa, and women could take a stronger role in land management. They could be more assertive in managing land in the direction of their conservation goal."

Rachel believes women who are landowners need to realize they have control over the landscape. "Traditional ways things have always been done might be worth questioning," she suggests.

The family bonding together to preserve land is unique, as Kate pointed out. "But this is Whiterock," she said. "I'm going to have my ashes sprinkled here..."

Historically, according to Liz, the Garst family culture has always been to make the world a better place. So it is not surprising that they should work to protect the land for future generations.

Whiterock Conservancy

www.whiterockconservancy.org

Whiterock Conservancy is an Iowa nonprofit land trust dedicated to conserving and protecting Iowa's natural resources, demonstrating sustainable rural land management and engaging the public with the environment through outdoor recreation and education. Its 5,000 contiguous acres include prairie, wetland, woodland, oak savannah and riparian zones. Focused on biodiversity and sustainability, the property extends seven miles along the Middle Raccoon River, from the edge of Coon Rapids into northwest Guthrie County. With the City of Coon Rapids, it was among the first to be named an Iowa "Great Place."

Accommodations include bed-and-breakfast-style lodges and cottages as well as primitive camp sites and cabins suitable for a romantic getaway, family reunion, corporate retreat or family vacation.

Free recreation at the resort includes fishing, hiking, bird watching, volleyball, horseshoes, croquet and more.

Other activities include workshops (botany, raptor, falconry), tours (astronomy, wildlife, commercial, alternative agricultural, prairie), the Khrushchev History Talk and hay rides. Canoes, mountain bikes, gators and telescopes are available for rent. Hunting is limited to whitetail bow hunts and corporate pheasant hunts.

Currently, Liz Garst serves as the volunteer special projects director; Rachel Garst serves as the volunteer outreach coordinator; and Jennifer Garst serves as the board secretary and works with policies and procedures.



Photo by Sue Ellen Tuttle

Fire is used to restore prairie remnants like this one back to native conditions. Conservancy burning practices are helping people understand the benefit of fire in helping clear out invasive species and shrubs. Historically, fire suppression has significantly changed the landscape of Iowa, causing the loss of oak trees. Oaks need a lot of sunshine; fire kills lots of little softwood trees that shade out the oak trees and cause them to fail.

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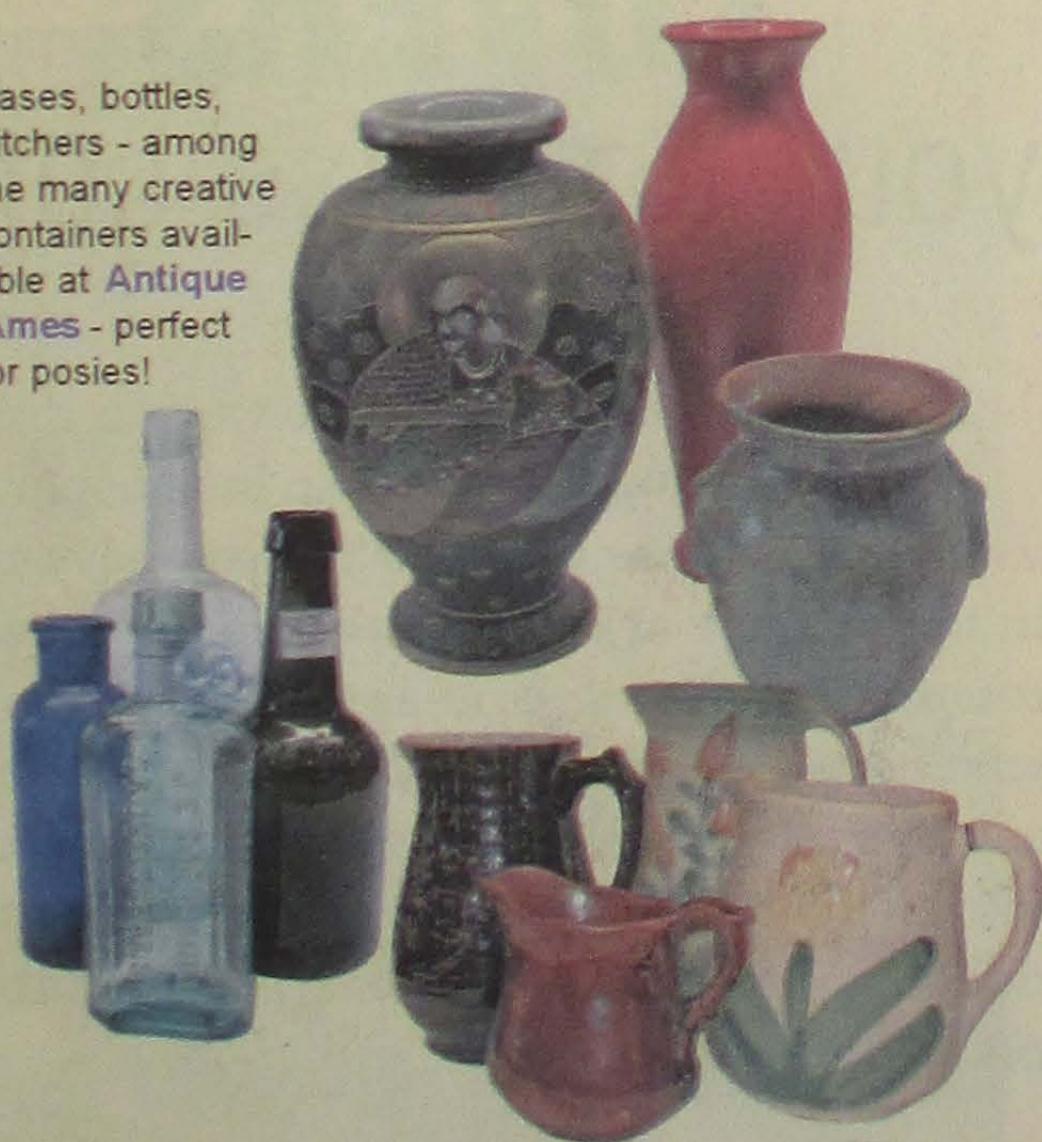


Join the Octagon on April 5 from 2-5 p.m. for Holi, a Festival of Colors. Holi is a celebration in India to commemorate spring. This is the second event in our Art for Diverse Audiences series funded in part by the City of Ames Commission on the Arts. **The Octagon Center for the Arts** offers classes for artists of all ages. For a complete listing of spring classes visit www.octagonarts.org.



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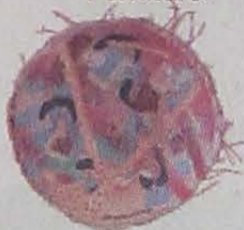
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Photo by Jolene Philo

ASPARAGUS LOVERS, your time has come!

April is the month for Iowans to divide into two camps: Those who love asparagus and those who don't. If you have people in both camps at your house, use the omelet recipe that follows to please everyone. For those who have waited 10 months for the taste of fresh asparagus, prepare the omelets as directed. For those who don't appreciate this springtime delicacy, use a different steamed vegetable in place of the asparagus.

Asparagus Omelet

1 pound asparagus, trimmed
4 ounces (1 cup) Swiss cheese, shredded
1/8 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper
8 large eggs
1/2 teaspoon salt
4 teaspoons margarine or butter

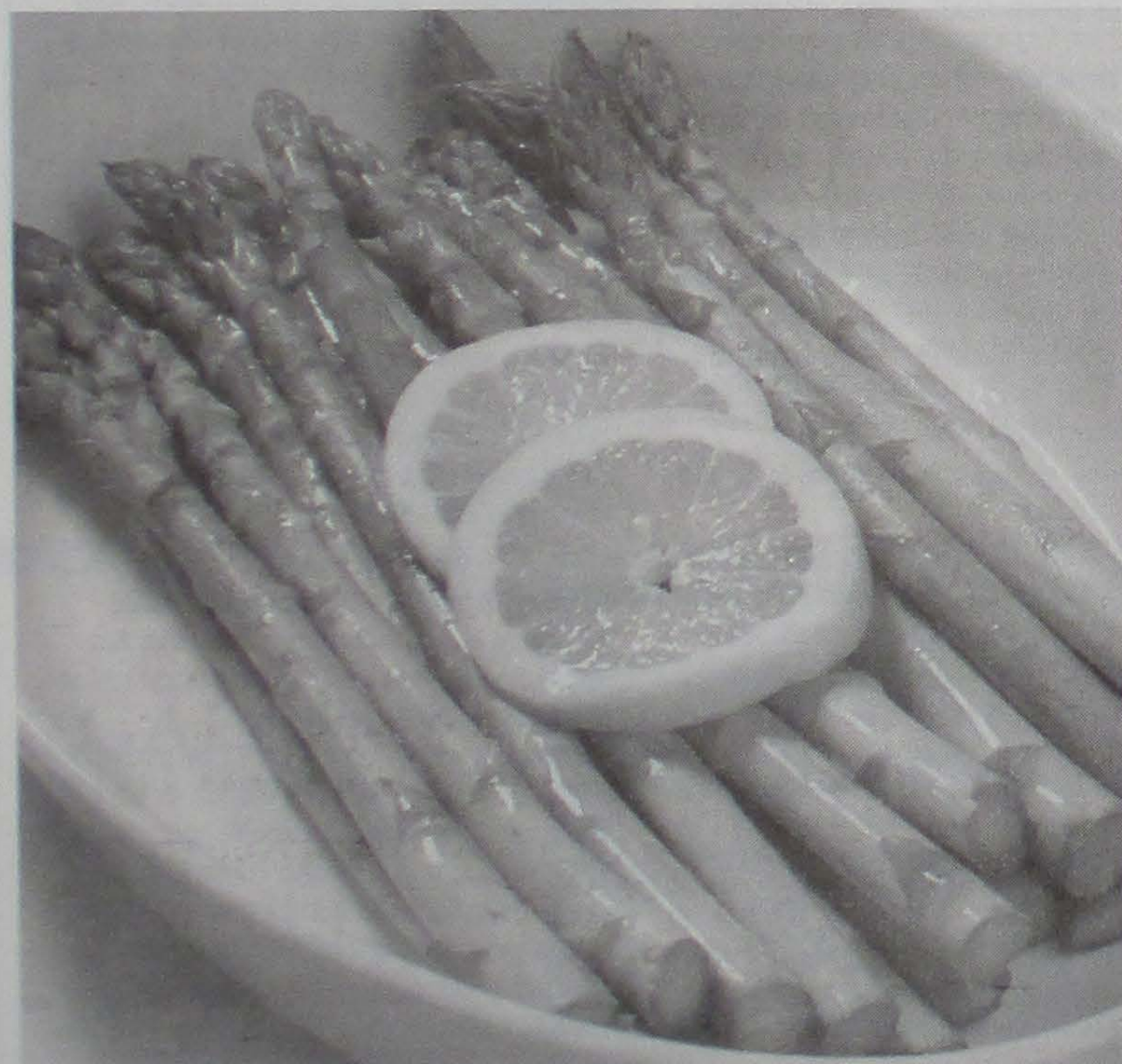
Drop asparagus spears into a deep 12-inch skillet containing 1 inch boiling water. Heat asparagus, returning the water to boiling over high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low; simmer, uncovered, just until tender. Drain asparagus; rinse with cold running water to stop cooking. Sprinkle pepper over Swiss cheese.

In medium bowl, with wire whisk, beat eggs, salt and 1/2 cup cold water. For each omelet, in nonstick 8-inch skillet, melt 1 teaspoon margarine or butter over medium-high heat. Pour in 1/2 cup egg mixture; cook until set (about 1 minute), gently lifting edge. Sprinkle one-fourth of cheese mixture on half of omelet; top with one-fourth of asparagus spears. Fold over other half of omelet. Slide onto plate. Repeat to make 4 omelets in all.

This recipe was adapted from "The All New Good Housekeeping Cookbook" edited by Susan Westmoreland (Hearst).

Helpful Hint:

To trim asparagus, hold one end of the asparagus spear in each hand and bend the stalk. The spear will naturally break at the point where it becomes tough.



Where to Find Asparagus, Eggs and Prosciutto

Iowa's asparagus season runs from late March through early June. Check the Ames Farmers Market Web site (www.amesfarmersmarket.com) to see when local producers will have it available for purchase.

Located at the Main Street Depot, the market also has farm-fresh eggs for sale. It is open from 2 to 7 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays and from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays.

La Quercia Prosciutto, a world-class brand made in Newton, is available at the Ames Fareway store.

A Party Treat

Donna Prizgintas, an area chef, likes to broil asparagus spears on high for a very short time. She cools them immediately, rolling them onto a counter top and spreading them out. She turns the broiled spears into party food by serving them wrapped in thin slices of prosciutto accompanied by a bowl of Hollandaise sauce for dipping.

Freezer Tips

Asparagus is easy to freeze. Call your county Iowa State University Extension Office and order the publication "Freezing and Fruits and Vegetables" or visit <http://dbs.extension.iastate.edu/answers/projects/answerline/questions/answer381.html>

FACETS calendar

If you have an event that would be of interest to Facets readers, please send it to news@arnestrib.com with "Facets Calendar" in the subject line.

Thursday, April 3 — Tanya Zanish-Belcher, "The Early Years at Iowa State," 7 p.m., Christian Petersen Art Museum. Experience an Iowa State University before paved roads and telephone service. Learn what college was like for the first students and faculty that called Iowa State their home. Tanya Zanish-Belcher of Parks Library's Special Collections department will share her knowledge of early campus life and give visitors an understanding of just how far we've come. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.

Friday, April 4 — American Historical Glass by Dave Christiansen, 7:30 p.m., Benton Auditorium, Scheman Building. In celebration of the opening of the exhibition, "The Evolution of American Pressed Glass: 1825 to 1925," at the Brunnier Art Museum, the Questers of Iowa invite guests to an opening lecture by scholar, collector and Early American Pattern Glass Society board member Dave Christiansen.

Sunday, April 6 — Dorothy Schwieder, "Why Iowa?" 2 p.m., Christian Petersen Art Museum. Many may know that Iowa State University was the first college in the nation to accept the terms of the Morrill Act, the legislation that began land-grant institutions and changed higher education forever. What may still be a mystery is... why? Dr. Dorothy Schwieder, historian, author and Iowa State professor emeritus, will explain the political climate and physical circumstances that led to a national first. Doors open at 1 p.m.

Thursday, April 10 — "Morrill by Moonlight," 7 p.m. at the Christian Petersen Art Museum. Join University Museums staff at the Christian Petersen Art Museum for an evening look at the Morrill Act of 1862. Afterward, follow your tour guide to a few historically significant spots on campus to receive a new perspective of the Iowa State University you thought you knew. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.

Fridays and Saturdays, April 11, 12, 18 and 19 — Veishea and ISU Theatre present "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," 7:30 p.m., Fisher Theatre. This musical is one of Broadway's greatest farces

and combines situations from the 2000-year-old Roman comedies with the infectious energy of classic vaudeville. It tells the bawdy story of a slave named Pseudolus and his attempts to win his freedom by helping his young master woo one of the courtesans who lives next door. As things go wrong, Pseudolus is forced to keep changing his complicated and ludicrous plans if he wishes to be a free man. This musical won five Tony awards, including best musical and best book. For ticket information, call 233-1888 or visit www.theatre.iastate.edu.

Sundays, April 13 and 20 — Veishea and ISU Theatre present "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," 2 p.m., Fisher Theatre. For ticket information, call 233-1888 or visit www.theatre.iastate.edu.

Sunday, April 13 — Art Book Club, "I Was Vermeer," 2 p.m., the Brunnier Art Museum. This is the incredible story of how Dutch painter Hans van Meegeren became an expert forger of Vermeer and fooled the Nazis with his skill. It is a tale of cunning and deceit that unfolds with all the tension of a thriller.

Sunday, April 13 — Barn Owl Band, 3 p.m., Main Gallery, Octagon Center for the Arts, 427 Douglas Ave.

Wednesday, April 16 — Wednesday Walk, "Agriculture, Animals and Art," noon on the ISU Campus. This Wednesday we will explore the works of art in Kildee Hall—Ned Smyth's "Balance of Life" and Dwight Kirsch's mural before viewing Mira Engler's "Interior Garden." Meet at the south entrance to Kildee Hall off of Osborne Drive.

Friday, April 18 — "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof," 7:30 p.m., C.Y. Stephens Auditorium. This Tennessee Williams play features vibrant characters trapped in a repressive society where miscommunication leads to unavoidable and unbearable loneliness. For ticket information, call 233-1888 or visit www.theatre.iastate.edu.

Sunday, April 20 — English Essay Awards Ceremony, 2 p.m., Brunnier Art Museum. Join University Museums in honoring

outstanding essays written by Iowa State University students about works of art in University Museums' permanent collection. Hear a student's perspective on works of art you thought you knew, and become reacquainted with old favorites. University Museums will read portions of all top essays, and will read the four winning essays in their entirety.

Thursday, April 24 — Film, "Democracy's College," 7 p.m., Christian Petersen Art Museum. "Democracy's College," a film celebrating Iowa State University's centennial, traces the development of Iowa State College as a land grant institution. The film provides a re-enactment of Benjamin Gue's speech to the Iowa Legislature for establishment of a college "open to all." It includes comments from James H. Hilton, president of Iowa State, on the land grant mission of the university. The film is approximately 25 minutes long and will be shown in the Auditorium of Morrill Hall, second floor.

Friday, April 25 — Iowa State University's Textiles and Clothing Fashion Show, 6:30 p.m., Stephens Auditorium. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. For ticket information, call 233-1888 or visit www.theatre.iastate.edu.

Saturday, April 26 — Central Iowa Barn Dance, 8 to 11 p.m., Collegiate-Wesley Annex, 130 S. Sheldon Ave. Central Iowa Barn Dance will host an evening of music and dance, contras and squares. Admission is \$5 or \$3 for students. All dances are taught and called. No partner needed. Everyone is welcome. For more information visit www.cibd.org or call 292-5587.

Sunday, April 27 — Sesquicentennial Jeopardy, 2 p.m., Christian Petersen Art Museum. Why not visit the Christian Petersen Art Museum for a test of your Sesquicentennial knowledge? The audience will be invited to join in on the fun as we play a round of Jeopardy with special visitors and categories that include the 1800s Entrance Exam, Favorite Firsts and, of course, Potpourri. Don't worry, answering in the form of a question is encouraged, not required. Doors open at 1 p.m.

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"They went the extra mile to make sure the bathroom looked great, and to make sure it was what I asked for..."

-Joe Rippetoe

It's no secret that the Ames Contracting Team can help with any contracting job, big or small, but in this case it was a big project, in a very small area.

A few years ago, Joe Rippetoe injured his ACL playing basketball. After a successful knee surgery, his doctors told him there was a big possibility he would develop arthritis in his knee. Joe was not given a time frame on when limitation on his knee mobility might start to bother him, but he knew that when it did, making a trip up and down the stairs to bathe in his only full bathroom in his home would only worsen his condition. There was a small half bath located on the first floor, but it seemed impossible to fit in the existing toilet and sink and add a shower in the small space. When Joe contacted the Ames Contracting Team, they said it would be a challenge, but felt confident they could make it work.

Ames Contracting Team drew up blueprints, had them approved by the city inspectors, and started the job right away. The space was so small it was difficult to get two workmen in the area at the same time.

First, Ames Contracting Team rotated the toilet, and found a small yet higher up toilet which not only provided more space, but is also a lot easier on Joe's knees. They also found a small pedestal sink to provide more space for the shower. Ames Contracting Team's biggest challenge was to make space for a shower; they had to remove an

exterior wall, and then add to the bathroom a 4' x 4' exterior space between the original house and a sun room addition. A new drain for each new plumbing fixture had to be installed. When flooring and plumbing were completed the bathroom was expanded and there was room for a small new shower. The house had aluminum siding put on 20 years ago, and matching siding would have been hard to find. Oren and his team were very careful to preserve the removed siding for use on the new exterior wall. "They were incredibly attentive to making sure the newly extended bathroom blended in with the existing house" said Joe.

Joe Rippetoe was confident that the Ames Contracting Team would do excellent work, not only had Gibbs done their furnace and plumbing work for many years, they had heard from friends that the Ames Contracting Team's work was among the best in the area. "They went the extra mile to make sure the bathroom looked great, and to make sure it was what I asked for," said Joe. "I had a plan of how I wanted the bathroom to look, and the Ames Contracting Team gave input to make sure the bathroom was esthetically pleasing, and would be functional and practical."

Joe Rippetoe was extremely pleased with the Ames Contracting Team's work, and would recommend them to any one no matter how big or small. Call them today to discuss your project.

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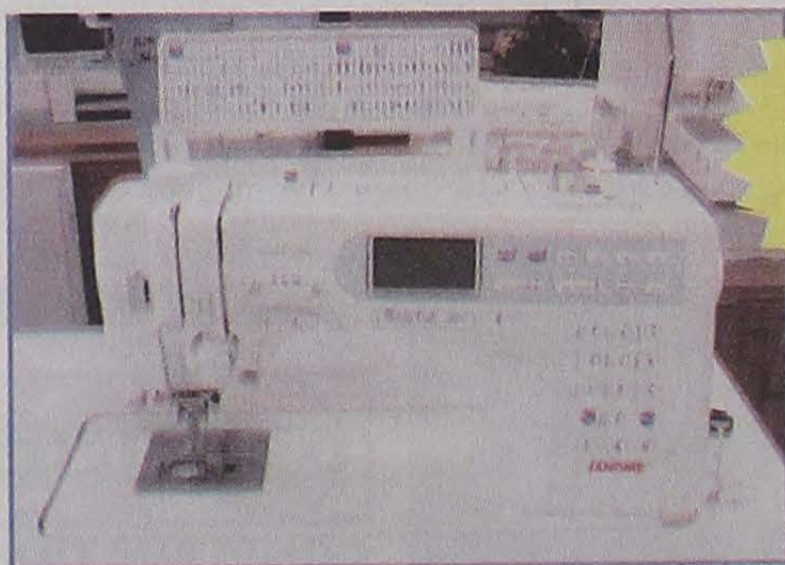
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Cynthia HAYNES:

Her passion for plants is contagious

By JOLENE PHILO

Dr. Cynthia Haynes has a passion for gardening, and it's contagious. Her love for all things green began as a child, when she helped her father and grandparents in their northern Louisiana gardens. The passion grew after high school when she attended Louisiana Tech to become a florist.

But a year in a flower shop only made her want to learn more. So she entered graduate school at the University of Georgia, where she earned both her master's and doctorate in horticulture. She moved to Iowa when her husband accepted a job with Pioneer.



Photo by Jolene Philo

Dr. Cynthia Haynes tends to a croton, one of many beautiful plants growing in the horticulture department's conservatory.



Leading with Passion

For the last 12 years, Haynes has been a member of the faculty in the Iowa State University Department of Horticulture, where she shares her expertise with others. "I like to teach about plants," she explains. "And I like outreach."

In July of 2007 she was appointed as leader of one of ISU Extension's most popular

outreach vehicles, the Master Gardener Program. The position allows her to do what she enjoys most. "About half of my time is spent teaching undergrads. The rest of my time is devoted to the Master Gardener Program. My colleague James Romer coordinates the day-to-day details of the program. I deal more with the big picture."

Training with Passion

She hopes the big picture will get even bigger. The Master Gardener program began in the late 1970s. Since then, the program, which requires participants to complete 40 hours of training and 40 hours of community service to be awarded the designation of master gardener, has been offered in almost every Iowa county. Today, master gardeners are in 90 percent of the state's counties.

But Haynes wants more. "We'd like the program to get larger so more people get involved. We'd like to capture more interest and spur volunteerism. And we want our trained master gardeners to stay active and get involved in training others."



Web casting makes those goals more achievable and efficient. Between 500 and 600 gardeners are trained across the state each year. Haynes explains how they

operate: "Speakers in Ames do the training with a live area group, and the broadcast goes to other groups around the state. The session is live and interactive. And it is archived. If bad weather keeps people away from the live session, they can watch it at a later date."

Nurturing with Passion

The best part of the job, Haynes says, is working with the master gardeners:

"They're fun to teach, to talk to, to learn from. They are so dedicated and willing to devote time to the program. They revive and inspire me."

Haynes encourages master gardeners to take advantage of new learning opportunities available to them. Each semester, hands-on Saturday sessions are held on campus for master gardeners. "They dissect flowers, look at diseases and insects and visit the soil labs. They get their hands dirty."

This summer, a special program will be held on July

11 and 12. "Master gardeners will stay a couple days, sleeping in the dorms at night. They'll tour campus gardens, study trees and diseases and go on a bug hunt."

Recruiting with Passion

If you're interested in becoming a master gardener, Dr. Haynes has some advice: "Call your county extension office and ask to be put in touch with master gardeners who can tell you what's involved. The extension office can also tell you when the training is scheduled in your area. Some counties offer it yearly, while others have it every other year."

But be forewarned. Once you enter the program, a passion for all things green will start to take root in you. Because master gardeners are a lot like the woman who leads the program. "I love to share my passion about plants," Haynes admits. "I love to see it become contagious."



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Area Master Gardeners Spread Their Passion

The Story County Master Gardeners is one of the most active groups in the state. A few members of the group recently shared a bit of their gardening histories.

LYNETTE SPICER, Master Gardener since 2000

My interest in gardening began when: my oldest child planted a garden as a 4-H project and I learned right along with her.

My gardening specialties are: shade gardens, cottage gardens, cut flowers that last and last.

My favorite gardening trick is: mulch, mulch, mulch.

The best thing about gardening is: being outside, time to think, creativity, the challenge of trying something new or mixing different plants, the beauty.

My Master Gardener volunteer activities include: maintaining the community garden in Brookside Park. I put many flats of plants in the concrete structure north of Carr's Pool last fall. I keep a community plot at the community garden, South Maple in Squaw Creek Park.



The African violets Meg Speer started from cuttings brought color and cheer to the long winter of 2008.

MEG SPEER, Master Gardener since 1995

My interest in gardening began when: I was a child. I have pictures of the great vegetable garden my maternal grandfather had; and later my father's.

My gardening specialty is: African violets in the winter. For summer and outdoors my favorite is Lisianthus.

The best thing about gardening is: flowers are cheery and beautiful both indoors and out — a lift to the heat of summer and the cold days we had this winter.

My Master Gardener volunteer activities include: working with my husband, Vaughn, who is also a Master Gardener, at Reiman Gardens.



Master gardeners Patti Woo, Nancy Masteller and Annette Thompson in the garden they tend at Ada Hayden Park.

ANNETTE THOMPSON, Master Gardener since 2004

My interest in gardening began when: I was 4 or 5. The elderly neighbor lady used to let me help her in her flower garden.

My gardening specialty is: I don't have a specialty, but my favorite plant is the bearded iris my aunt gave me that she got from her grandmother, my great-grandmother.

My favorite gardening trick is: mulch so you don't have to weed or water as often.

The best thing about gardening is: getting outside. Gardening helps relieve any stress I may have. I feel a sense of accomplishment when my garden is blooming.

My Master Gardener volunteer activities include: being a member of the Grumpy Gardeners. We adopted the flower garden in front of the restrooms at Ada Hayden Heritage Park. We have planted a lot of natives and hope to eventually do away with the annuals.

LISA HARMISON, Master Gardener since 2002

My interest in gardening began when: I was a child. I remember burying my bare feet and hands in the rich soil at my grandparents when we were digging potatoes. I spent a lot of time helping my parents plant vegetables and flowers too.

My gardening specialty is: trees. I've spent a lot of time reading and learning about how they grow and how to care for them.

My favorite gardening trick is: putting the right plant in the right place.

The best thing about gardening is: being outside and enjoying nature. I also especially enjoy eating fresh fruits and vegetables from the garden and making bouquets with cut flowers.

My Master Gardener volunteer activities include: organizing the Master Gardener Presents workshops, and the Garden Walk tour of area gardens. I am on the Donations and Grants committee, the Master Gardener Forum committee, and the Programs committee. I plant and tend the Tom Evans Plaza flowerbed. I am also the coordinator for the Plant a Row for the Hungry program in Story County.

Wilber's Northside Market

By SUE ULLESTAD

Growing vegetables and fruit is not just a hobby or an out-door project for Julie and Scott Wilber of Boone. They have made gardening their full-time profession. It also happens to be their joy and passion, a dream becoming a reality. Julie, an enrolled agent hoping to become a certified public accountant, works the tax season with Rose Hubby, CPA. Scott is quitting his job with the city of Boone this month as planting time is fast approaching.

Scott and Julie along with their children, Drew, 10, and Jade, 8, are turning their family project into their livelihood. Together they run Wilber's Northside Market, a fruit and vegetable stand near their home on the very north edge of Boone. Previously tilling 5 acres, this year they will raise 25 different fruits and vegetables on 22 acres of land. They are pumped and ready to go.

Scott and Julie have been taking an entrepreneur course at Iowa State University on Saturdays since January learning tips to accelerate their business and to develop their trade area. Again, they have attended the Iowa Fruit/Vegetable Growers Association (of which they are members) conference to hear from ISU researchers who give their insight into the best seed varieties.

The Wilbers grow their fruits and vegetables mostly from seed. They try to minimize the use of weed control by planting cover crops. Cover crops are used as a living mulch to reduce weeds and eliminate ground rot. Oats are grown in early spring and flattened between rows. Winter wheat is grown to cover the ground for fall gardening which includes pumpkin, watermelon, cantaloupe, squash, gourds and Indian corn.

Julie belongs to "Iowans Fit for Life," a local food committee which promotes buying fresh produce locally grown as well as meat and eggs raised in the area. She and Rich Wrage, from the Boone County Extension Office, are designing a



Photo by Ronnie Miller

Scott and Julie Wilber, of Boone, own Wilber's Northside Market in Boone where they grow a large variety of produce on 22 acres. The gardening duo are just beginning their planting process.

brochure to encourage the public to buy locally from farmer's markets, cooperatives and meat lockers. Julie lists the reasons for doing so as follows:

- 1) cuts down on gas emissions
- 2) more nutritious
- 3) fresher
- 4) no preservatives
- 5) tastier
- 6) less chemical use
- 7) picked when naturally ripe
- 8) knowledge of where the produce came from
- 9) supports a clean environment
- 10) supports local economy.

The Wilbers are the only CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) cooperative system in the Boone area. This is an alliance between the farmer and the customer. The customer buys a \$300 membership which entitles him or her to \$20 worth of fresh produce weekly from June through September. They receive the very best of the picking. The Wilbers cite these alliances as a national movement.

Do you enjoy eating sweet corn in the summer? The Wilbers boast of the best-tasting corn around. They pride themselves in the earliest corn – as early as June 28.

A typical "sweet corn" day begins at dawn. Drew drives the truck as Scott and Julie pick the ears of corn. Some are sold at their food stand, some at the Dollar General parking lot, and on Thursdays, the Wilbers sell at the Boone Farmer's Market. This is Jade and Drew's favorite thing about the farm... waiting on the customers.

"The children have become very social," Julie says.

After a lunch, which includes corn, it's out to the field to pick more corn. What doesn't sell by the end of the day goes to the food pantry in town. The Wilbers sell only fresh corn picked that day. Drew enjoys balancing the books at the end of the day.

"His figures are correct, too!" Dad adds.

Julie loves the farm and the market work.

"I can be home, be with the kids, be active, be outside, and help others eat better!"

The Wilbers are dedicated to family and their community. They have many loyal customers, even from surrounding communities.

It makes Julie and Scott's day to hear comments like, "I never knew can-

taloupe could taste this good!" or "This is the best sweet corn I've ever had!" or "My son eats your strawberries, and not those from the grocery store!" or "I never liked cucumbers before!"

Scott says of their farming, "How lucky I am that Julie loves what I love to do!" and "It's so satisfying for us to see folks discover the natural goodness of our fruits and vegetables!" When people get used to eating "fresh," they never want to eat anything else!

I know I'm going to Wilber's Market to buy fruits and vegetables that I can't grow in my little garden. I might be really healthy and walk there as it is only a half mile away from my house!

Photo by Ronnie Miller



Website: wilbersproduce.com

Includes CSA details, newsletter, pictures, recipes and cooking tips.

Wilber's Northside Market

2407 Marshall St.
Boone, Iowa 50036

owners: Julie and Scott Wilber

Boone Farmers' Market

3-6pm Thursdays
June-October
Wal-Mart parking lot
1815 South Story St.
Boone, Iowa 50036

*(Boone Farmers' Market
President: Scott Wilber)*

MEET A *faceted* woman



Teresa with sons, Christopher and Patrick.



Teresa running in the Dam to Dam race.



Teresa with her parents and siblings.

Teresa McLaughlin

Director, Reiman Gardens | Two sons, two cats, one fish

What would you do with \$1,000 to spend on yourself?

Fly out with my two close friends to a girls-only weekend at a spa, and could I have another \$4,000?

Craziest fashion you ever wore:

My high school prom dress to a Ms. America party. I was Miss Informed.

I never leave home without:

My coupon books

Your favorite motto:

Take your work seriously, but never yourself, Margot Fonteyn.

What have you accomplished that has made you proud?

I've been gifted to raise and care for two children who teach me real lessons every day.

Do you believe in New Year's resolutions? Do you have one this year?

Yes, start running again, and I will if it ever stops snowing and the ice melts.

Best tip to look and feel great:

Don't fight your own natural beauty, enhance it.

How do you take care of yourself financially?

Getting stock tips from my dad.

If you could do or be anything you want, what would it be?

A writer or swimming teacher. Those have been my two favorite jobs, although the pay could have been better.

If you knew then what you know now, what would you have done differently?

Taken that job on a sloop in the Caribbean

My idea of a nightmare job:

A nightmare boss

My simplest pleasure:

A day on the pontoon with my friends and family

I crave:

Hot Tamales

When I am an old lady:

Actually, it's not been that different so far. As Doris Day says, the most frightening thing is the knowledge that it's just a phase and you'll grow out of it.

I am thankful for:

Tweezers

Favorite wardrobe staple:

Chapstick

What financial advice would you give other women?

Save, rely on yourself.

How do you give back to your community?

Ames Community Foundation Board member, contributor to United Way, help where I can with special events and activities in organizations where my kids are involved. Try to assist as many organizations that seek support from Reiman Gardens as we can financially accommodate.



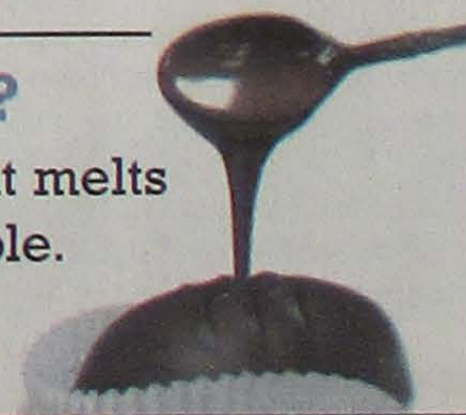
What is your favorite kind of chocolate?

Teresa McLaughlin: Rich, creamy milk chocolate that melts in your mouth and can be savored as long as possible.

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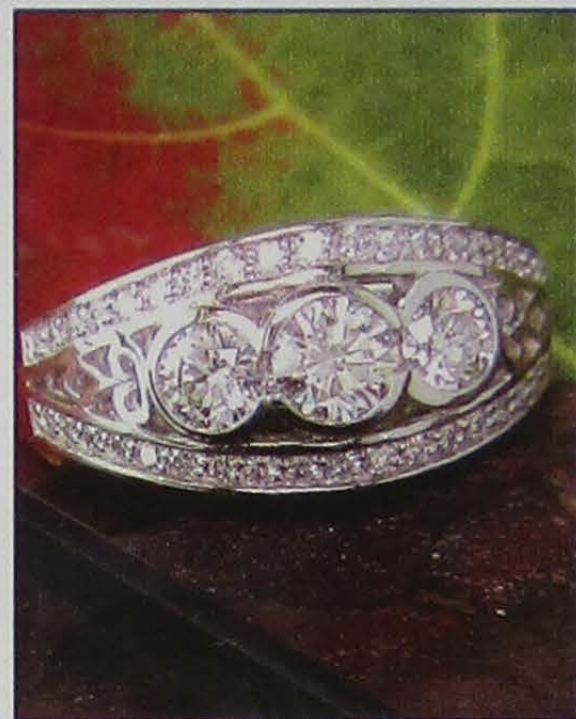
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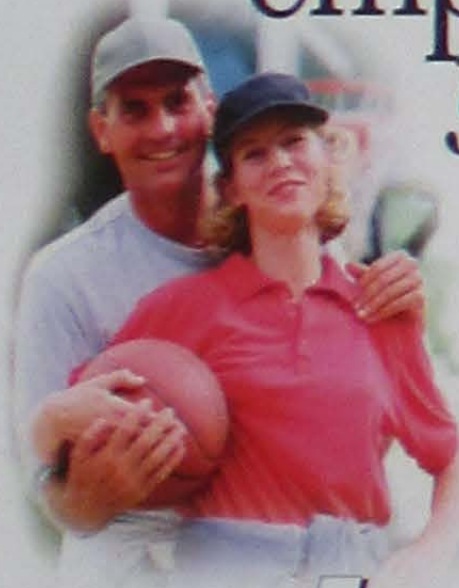
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